

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 PA-04 PRS-01 USIE-00 CIAE-00

INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 SS-20 NSC-07 SSO-00

NSCE-00 INRE-00 JUSE-00 DEAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 SY-04

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2542

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMCONGEN HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CGEN, TW, UK, HK

SUBJECT: BRITISH VESSEL SS PEISANDER - DEATH SENTENCE TWO HONG KONG CREWMEN

REF: HONG KONG 8671

1. ON JULY 3, 1974, THE BRITISH VESSEL SS PEISANDER WAS
DETAINED AT KAOHSIUNG WHEN CHINESE CUSTOMS OFFICERS DISCOVERED
2.3 KILOS OF HEROIN ABOARD. THE SS PEISANDER IS OWNED BY THE
BLUE FUNNEL LINES OF LIVERPOOL, U.K., A SUBSIDIARY OF THE
OCEAN STEAMSHIP COMPANY. THE VESSEL WAS LATER RELEASED
FROM CUSTODY BUT TWO HONG KONG CHINESE CREWMEN, WANG KEN CHIANG
AND CHANG HUNG CHU, WERE HELD BY CHINESE AUTHORITIES FOR TRIAL.
AS REPORTED IN THE LOCAL PRESS TODAY, A CHINESE COURT IN
KAOHSIUNG JULY 31 SENTENCED BOTH CREWMEN TO DEATH BY FIRING
SQUAD.

2. AN EMBASSY OFFICER HAS BEEN INFORMED BY JOHN GALE,
TAIPEI MANAGER OF THE AGENTS OF THE VESSEL, BUTTERFIELD
AND SWIRE, THAT A CHINESE LAWYER, CALVIN Y.C. LING, OF
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KAOHSIUNG, HAS BEEN RETAINED BY THE COMPANY TO APPEAL THE

COURT'S DEATH SENTENCE. GALE ALSO STATES THAT THE HONG KONG CHINESE SEAMEN'S UNION HAS THREATENED TO IMPLEMENT A BOYCOTT PROHIBITING ENTRY OF ANY HONG KONG SEAMAN INTO TAIWAN ON ANY VESSEL IF THE TWO HONG KONG SEAMEN ARE EXECUTED.

3. GALE ADDED THAT IT HAS BEEN HIS EXPERIENCE THAT THE APPEAL OF SENTENCE WILL TAKE NO MORE THAN TEN DAYS. IF THE APPELLATE COURT DENIES THE APPEAL, THE SENTENCE WILL BE CARRIED OUT EXPEDITIOUSLY, I.E. WITHIN 48 HOURS. OUR EXPERIENCE LEADS US TO CONCUR WITH HIS JUDGMENT.

4. IN A CONVERSATION WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICER THIS MORNING, THE PHILIPPINE AMBASSADOR IN TAIPEI MENTIONED THAT HE HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN A SIMILAR SITUATION ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO. HE SAID THAT DUE TO REPRESENTATIONS BY THE GOP EMBASSY TAIPEI, AND A COMPETENT APPEAL, THE DEATH SENTENCE IMPOSED ON TWO SEAMEN ON A PHILIPPINE VESSEL WAS COMMUTED BY THE HIGH COURT.

5. THE EMBASSY AGREES WITH CONGEN HONG KONG THAT THIS IS A MATTER IN WHICH USG SHOULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED. REQUEST GUIDANCE ASAP.

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